

# ***BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL***

## **Binegar Playground**

### **Current position**

At the November meeting, Philip resigned as Chair of Binegar Playing Fields Group and stated that three other members had also resigned, leaving only David. Given its terms of reference, the Playing Fields Group is no longer able to operate.

### **Interim management arrangement**

The playground is an important and popular asset. The Clerk and Chair have given attention to an interim arrangement to ensure safety, insurance compliance and appropriate maintenance.

We propose that the Clerk becomes the management focus with a role to ensure the safe provision of playground apparatus, facilities and environment.

Cath will continue to arrange safety inspections and monitor they have been done. We ask all Councillors to participate. Safety inspections are weekly from 1 April to 31 October and fortnightly from 1 November to 31 March. Between the December meeting and 31 March, nine inspections are due.

We ask Councillors to email reports to Cath and Diane. Diane will monitor recommendations and report them to the next Council meeting (taking action on any urgent items at once).

The Clerk will:

- Use inspection reports to plan maintenance work and keep them as an safety audit trail
- Maintain the playground asset register
- Respond (with the Chair) to the annual RoSPA safety assessment with a report to the Council
- Use the period of interim arrangements to assess budget needs
- Advise when the Council should consider arrangements that are more permanent

### **Immediate works**

#### **Large multiplay**

Philip and *Big Wood Play Systems* have completed work to the large multiplay other than replacing the slide and making good the ground. As agreed, the Council's playground account will meet these costs. Before the multiplay opens, there are issues to resolve<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Junior multiplay**

There is conflicting advice. Philip suggests replacement on the ground that the structure is decaying. The 2015 RoSPA assessment noted this but recommended only monitoring. A second, professional opinion reinforced the RoSPA advice, noting that the structure was rigid and stable. There is, however, decay in some of the structure.

We recommend cutting out decay in the tops of the posts, treating the cut ends and monitoring decay elsewhere. The quotation is £80 for this work (together with checking bolts under the bridge and renovating the Climber A-frame shelter as recommended by RoSPA).

The advantages of this approach are: it keeps money in the playground account towards any future replacement; it offers the chance to ask whether ground that is wet for much of the year is suitable for buried wooden structures; it retains apparatus that may continue to have a useful life.

We have remedied the fault to the slide's top fixing though splits in the plastic will need monitoring.

### Climber A-frame shelter

We recommend renovation (within the price for works to the junior multiplay).

### Swing seat

We removed the swing seat and offered it to its maker (*Big Wood Play Systems*) which declined the offer. It is large and uncomfortable, heavy and difficult to move. We recommend disposal.

### Timber frame support (ex-swing seat)

This frame is sound and able to support a single swing. We recommend a bird's nest swing.

It is suitable for people with disability and of all ages thus increasing the accessibility of the playground.

We recommend a bid to the County Health and Wellbeing Fund. The Clerk has obtained quotations of £745 (ex VAT) for the swing and an estimated (against the asset register) £2,500 (ex VAT) for a suitable safety (impact attenuating) surface.



### Other maintenance items

The 2015 RoSPA report recommended protection of junior multiplay posts from strimmer damage.

Binegar Playing Fields Group identified a number of maintenance items: block wall – damage; slide – need for welding of parts; see saw – improved seat; fun ball – cleaning; seat by entrance – repair to slat; swing safety surface - repair holes left by old swing structure.

### Financial implications

The playground account stands a £2,717. We are committed to spend money on the large multiplay but the final amount is to be determined. In this report, we recommend spending a further £80.

### Summary of recommendations

We ask the Council to:

- Approve the interim management arrangements set out above
- Agree to retain the junior multiplay and undertake remedial works (including climber A-frame)
- Write off and dispose of the swing seat
- Approve a bid to the County Councillors' Health and Wellbeing Fund for a bird's nest swing

Diane Abbott  
Richard Higgins  
24 November 2015

---

<sup>1</sup> We expect a certificate indicating compliance with safety standards for play apparatus. Philip reports that *Big Wood* has no such certification for the large multiplay. *Big Wood's* advertising states that all equipment is built to exceed the standards set in EN1176/EN1177 of the European safety standard for play equipment; we should expect a statement to this effect from *Big Wood*. The Clerk has therefore made a second request.

*Big Wood's* advertising also states that *Big Wood's* play systems are inspected and approved by RoSPA before entering public use; we would expect *Big Wood* to have this activity undertaken before handing back the large multiplay to the council. The Clerk has sought clarification on how this will be achieved.